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ABSTRACT

An active staffing process used by teacher center personnel was investigated as a method of improving teacher center operations and of helping users of teacher centers. Through a preliminary survey of users' attitudes toward teacher centers, three expectations were formulated: (1) Many initial requests in the active staffing process would center around a request for materials; (2) Teachers could easily be referred to other teachers for exchanges of ideas; and (3) Teachers would tend to see staff members as supervisors rather than as peers. One staff member was trained in active staffing techniques, which included developing a problem-solving relationship with the user and concentrating on multifaceted, long-range concerns of the user. By building on the user's knowledge and experience, the staff member and user were able to identify the concern, work through the issue together, and maintain contact for future developments. After training, the staff member worked with six experienced teachers who had been reassigned to unfamiliar teaching situations and with three beginning teachers. Data on the active staffing process and teachers' attitudes were collected from logs kept by the staff member and through post-study interviews with eight of the participating teachers. A comparison of pre- and post-study interviews revealed that teachers' perceptions of the consulting service showed a marked rise, and that needs in other curricular areas, such as lesson plans, became priorities. From teachers' comments, it was concluded that the active staffing process helped six of the eight teachers interviewed. (FG)

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A STUDY OF THE ACTIVE STAFFING PROCESS OF A TEACHERS' CENTER

FINAL REPORT

March, 1982

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Chicago Teachers' Center
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ABSTRACT

CHICAGO TEACHERS' CENTER
Northeastern Illinois University

A STUDY OF THE ACTIVE STAFFINGPROCESS OF A TEACHERS' CENTER

Principal Investigator: Dr. Margaret A. Richek
Research Associate: Inez H. Wilson

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Teacher centers have the potential to be settings where teacher concerns can become starting points for reflective thought and professional growth. In order to provide this kind of support, a center would need a staff of experienced teachers who could actively and empathically engage center users in discussions about their work. Such conversations would involve raising questions, suggesting options, or examining unstated assumptions.

In this study we researched how center staff and teachers actively interact with one another in order to reflect on issues about the teaching/learning process as it relates to curricular concerns. It was assumed that if teachers in a drop-in facility were approached by active staffers, more meaningful involvement would take place. Since a definition of active staffing is crucial to an understanding of these interactions, we focused on two questions: (1) what are the defining elements of active staffing from both the staff member's and the teacher's perspective, and (2) what is the role of an active staffing program within the context of a teacher center.

METHODOLOGY

The concept of active staffing was documented through the collaboration of an experienced teacher center staffer and a university researcher. This staff member employed the active staffing process in the center two days per week for four months and wrote detailed logs of encounters with nine subjects, which served as the data base for the study. Other staff members

at the Center participated in the active staffing process and its documentation. Written logs, reflections, and conversations were analyzed by the research team. To obtain preliminary estimates of teacher growth, baseline data of center users were gathered through telephone interviews. At the end of the active staffing phase of research, teacher participants were also interviewed by telephone.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Defining Elements of Active Staffing

Our analysis of the data revealed that the active staffing process can be divided into four stages. First, when a staffer responds to an initial request, emphasis is placed on establishing rapport and mutual respect. Second, in the process of assisting a teacher the staffer explores latent or underlying reasons for the manifest request or gives a broader perspective to the concern. This dialogue provides focus to the inquiry. Third, a variety of strategies are used to jointly solve the problems posed. These include: brainstorming, discussing possible instructional activities and principles, diagnosing children's needs and individual differences, and considering appropriate resources. Fourth, contact with teachers is maintained by inviting the teacher back to share classroom outcomes, offering to visit the teacher's classrooms, and being available for further consultation.

Guiding Principles

Several principles guided the active staffing process. First, active staffing was seen as a process that the staff and teacher create together, which means there must be openness on the teacher's part and an ability to foster dialogue on the staff person's part. Second, the active staffing process focuses primarily on ways of thinking about learning and teaching and the meaning of classroom activities for the teacher. Third, teachers bring a wealth of knowledge from past and current classroom experiences to active staffing encounters and these can serve as building-blocks for professional growth.

Active Staffing in Context

Finally, the active staffing process in this study was bounded by certain constraints. First, teachers who visited the center came from a variety of school situations and settings, and these contributed to the complexity of the interactions between staff and teacher. In some cases participants were under severe stress. Second, in order for a teacher to function effectively as a staffer, he/she must be able to draw upon a rich base of knowledge about human development as well as theories of learning and how they apply to specific classroom practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Fostering professional growth of teachers is among the most important objectives of a teachers' center. This objective is paramount in the minds of teacher center leaders and thinkers, who believe that centers have the potential to be settings where teachers' instructional concerns become starting points for reflective thought and extended growth. Teacher center literature identifies exchange of ideas, problem solving, and reflection as important elements in the growth process.

> A center works to strengthen the power of individuals as decision makers, to connect theory with practice, to help teachers identify and use multifarious resources, and to heighten teachers' self awareness and articulation of their values and needs (Thomas, 1979, p.13)
>
> A teachers' center truism is that the more teachers can be encouraged to express and develop their own ideas and to address their own problems in original ways...the more they will develop themselves as professionals, thus making the phrase "professional development" more than a euphemism. (Devaney, 1981, p.3)
>
> The question of teacher decision making is related to teacher planning in such areas as curriculum selection, development, and implementation. For some, teacher decision making is the key feature that distinguishes teacher centers from every other type of staff development or inservice training. (Shulman, 1978, p.188)

Although many centers have the materials and the trained, experienced staff ready to facilitate this kind of teacher development, there are few formal accounts of how to deliver these services. Despite the stated importance of professional growth to the life and goals of teachers' centers, there is little or no information about the conditions that support professional growth and if and how this growth can be actively fostered. In fact, there is even a lack of information about whether professional growth is a widespread outcome of teacher center usage.

In an observational study of teachers' centers, Feiman (1977) found that activities focus largely on immediate needs rather than professional interchange:

> The data depict the center at least during open hours, as a "make and take" operation. The most frequent type of activity involves teachers replicating materials on display and the most frequent type of talk focused on how something was made. Only a small percentage of the observed interactions concerned broad curricular issues or specific classroom problems. While many of the materials which teachers make at the center imply new approaches to teaching and learning there is little talk about their uses, extensions or implications." (p. 93)

Feiman's findings are confimred by the experience of the Chicago Teachers' Center. The majority of teachers using the center during drop-in hours copy games, or use machines. Requests for staff aid generally focus on these activities. Most conversations between staff and teachers relate to 'how to' rather than 'why'. Teachers are confronted with the immediacy of providing for children's day-to-day learning needs and demands to show achievement gains. Understandably, teachers often focus on concrete practical materials.

However, the answer to helping children with learning problems is not found in making colorful materials on ditto sheets. To help such children, a teacher must often take a fresh look at the overall instructional situation. Asking such questions as: "What do I want to teach? Are my children ready for this? What is the best way to organize this program?" In short, the application of educational and psychological theory is often needed for teachers to address instructional concerns.

Teacher centers are a natural place to encourage teachers to address instructional questions in depth. In order to facilitate this, a teachers' center needs a staff of trained, experienced teachers who can actively and empathically engage center users in conversations about their work. In the course of such conversations with teachers, the staff person raises questions, discusses alternatives and options, helps the teacher to examine stated and unstated assumptions.

In this study, we researched a process where center staff and teachers interacted in order to examine the teaching-learning process as it relates to practical teacher-curricular concerns. It was assumed that the active participation of center staff would be useful in helping teachers to do this. If teachers were approached by active staffers, the resulting encounters would

encourage teachers to reflect upon their classroom behavior and practices. This process would lead to professional growth.

We attempted to create opportunities for such interaction. The interactions were then studied to determine the conditions that foster meaningful dialogue, and more importantly, the actual process staff can use to encourage teacher professional growth. We named this interactive process "active staffing" to show that directed and deliberate actions were needed by the center staffer. The purpose of this study is to identify the defining elements of "active staffing."

METHODOLOGY

This study was a cooperative research project. The research team consisted of Inez Wilson, a person with extensive Teachers' Center knowledge and Margaret Richek, a person with research background. Through their collaboration, the process of active staffing was documented. Inez actually used the active staffing technique in the center. Her role was to both participate in the experience of "active staffing" and to reflect on her experiences. In continuing discussions, Peggy reacted to Inez' records and reflections on active staffing and contributed independent insights about the active staffing process.

OVERALL RESEARCH PLAN

In order to gather data, Inez employed the active staffing process in the center two days per week for a period of fourth months. Detailed logs were written for each active staffing encounter, and these logs form the primary source of data for this study. The research team did an extensive analysis of the logs in an attempt to define and codify the elements of active staffing. The conversations, reflections, and notes collected during the analysis of the logs form a secondary source of data.

Staff members other than Inez were also encouraged to use the active staffing process and to keep detailed logs. These logs were discussed by the individual staff member and Inez and these discussions served both to deepen

the staff member's understanding of active staffing and to further define the elements of active staffing for the research team. The written staff logs were independently analyzed by the research team and provided many clues to the defining elements of active staffing.

Information from teacher users of the center also helped the research team to understand the elements of active staffing. Knowledge of teachers' perceptions of the center before active staffing was instituted helped us to determine how teachers perceived the center, what services they thought were valuable, and how they viewed center staff. To gather this data, eight (8) teacher center users were interviewed by telephone. The information obtained helped the research team to set up an optimal active staffing environment from which the process could best be studied.

In addition, the specific teachers who participated in the active staffing process were interviewed at the close of the active staffing period. They were asked about their experiences at the center during the previous four months (the active staffing period) and their satisfaction with the center services. This information helped us to complete the picture of active staffing by determining how teachers participating perceived and described the process. It also gave us some preliminary data on the effects of active staffing on teacher growth.

SETTING UP THE ACTIVE STAFFING DATA COLLECTION PHASE

Substantial efforts were made to insure that there would be a sufficient number of active staffing encounters with Inez to effectively study the process. In order to encourage active staffing encounters with Inez, she staffed two times per week, regularly on Wednesday and Saturday -- the center's busiest days. On these days another staff member assumed the responsibilities of routine staffing tasks (finding materials, running machines). In addition, in order to assure that teachers were aware of the consulting aspects of the drop-in program, several announcements were made in the Center newsletter about available advisory services.

During staffing hours, Inez introduced herself to teachers at the reception desk and circulated through the Center offering assistance.

Other staff members often referred potential active staffing clients to consult with Inez on Wednesday and Saturdays.

During the four months of the study Inez logged encounters with nine (9) individuals. She encountered each individual the following number of times:

Code #	# Times	
01	2	Experienced teacher; newly assigned to LD resource room in Chicago suburbs
02	6	Newly assigned teacher in private school for emotionally disturbed adolescents (in Chicago)
03	5	Experienced CPS teacher, newly assigned to bilingual room
04	2	Newly assigned teacher in CPS, third grade
05	11	Experienced teacher, newly assigned to kindergarten and learning disabilities resource
06	1	Experienced teacher, newly assigned to ESEA pull-out program
07	1	Experienced teacher newly assigned to kindergarten
08	2	Newly assigned parochial pre-school teacher (in Chicago)
09	1	Experienced teacher, newly assigned to first grade, parochial school - Chicago.

Logs of each encounter reveal Inez' techniques and the reactions to these techniques.

FINDINGS

The findings are divided into (1) the preliminary data on teachers' use of the center, (2) the elements of active staffing, and (3) measuring the effects of active staffing.

PRELIMINARY DATA ON TEACHERS' USE OF CENTER

Before the active staffing period of the study was initiated, eight center-users were interviewed by telephone. The interviews enabled us to assess teachers' usage of the center, feelings about the center staff, and thoughts about teaching. Active staffing is a particularly intensive form of teacher center staffing, requiring commitment of time and thought from both the staff member and the center user. To assess the receptivity of teacher center users to this specialized service, we first sought to determine how teachers were actually using the center.

It was considered possible, given the observations of staff, that consulting formed only a minor part of teachers' use of the center. This situation would make the active staffing process less hospitable, but also more innovative.

Teachers' use of the center was assessed by asking (1) how the center was being used, (2) how teachers would like to use the center, (3) what type of advice or consulting services teachers found most useful, (4) teachers' perceptions of the center staff and (5) what teachers considered useful consulting sources. Results indicated that teachers view the center primarily as a materials resource. These results are detailed below.

How The Center Was Being Used

<u>Materials Resource</u> -- work with or make materials		
Using machines (laminating, dittoing)	6	
Making materials (games, bulletin boards)	7	
*Total number of teachers using materials resource		8
<u>Consulting Resource</u>		
Looking at books or displays for ideas	1	
Consulting with staff	1	
Total number of teachers using consulting resource		2
<u>Other Uses of Center</u>		
Brought class to center	1	

*There is overlap of teachers who, for example, "use machines" and "make materials."

Comradeship	1
Counseling source for self	1
Total number of teachers with miscellaneous use	1

These data graphically show that the use of the center as a materials resource far outweighs its use for consultation. This is further confirmed by the number of responses teachers gave within each category. While teachers frequently listed three or four different ways in which they used materials, only one type of consulting resource was mentioned by the two teachers who referred to this category.

How Teachers Would Like to Use the Center

Each of the eight teachers also detailed which services they had not used that they would like to use at the center. It was felt that teachers might state a desire to use consulting services, even if they had never actually used them. Results, listed in the categories given previously, for how teachers would like to use the center, follow:

Materials Resources	
Machines	0*
Making Materials	4
Consulting Resources	
Looking at Books or Displays	1
Consulting with Staff	2
Miscellaneous	
Bring class to the center	1
Get to know out of state resources	1

*No teachers expressed a desire to use machines because all teachers were currently using mahines,; teachers were asked to list services they were not using.

These data again suggest that teachers are primarily concerned about opportunities to make materials. Only two teachers out of eight expressed desire to consult with staff.

Activities Consulting with Staff and Their Content

At this point, several topics for consulting were actually listed and teachers were asked to rate their usefulness. It should be noted that a sample category would read, "How useful would you find the staff helping you to choose learning materials," or "How useful would you find the staff working with you to develop lessons." The results of these eight categories are listed below with a mean calculated on the responses of the eight teachers. A low mean indicates high interest.

Choose learning materials	1.14
Sharing new research on teaching methods	1.28
Working with you to develop teaching strategies	1.42
Consulting about classroom management	1.42
Helping you to look at a particular learning problem	1.42
Consulting about discipline	1.80
Discussing child development	1.86
Working with you to develop lessons	2.00

As would be expected, teachers expressed most interest in staff people helping them with materials. Next in interest was the staff's ability to discuss research with teachers. In this regard, the staff is seen more as resource people to theoretical ideas rather than as fellow teachers who are involved in joint exploration of teaching situations.

In keeping with this orientation, teachers rate cooperative efforts on curriculum problems as less interesting. Joint planning of lessons, the "nitty gritty" of teaching, is rated least interesting of all. Specialized concerns such as "particular learning problems," are rated as somewhat more interesting.

The only exception to this pattern is the category of "discussing child development issues." This is rated in the next to lowest category. We think that perhaps, teachers do not see the relationship between this

issue and their teaching concerns.

It is perhaps ironic that a discussion of child development and the actual planning of lessons were of little interest to the eight interviewed teachers. In fact, the active staffing process involved both of these activities to a rather large extent.

Teachers' Perceptions of the CTC Staff

To assess the role of the CTC staff, the teachers were asked how they felt the staff had helped them. Results are summarized below:

Locating supplies, helping with machines	4
Helping with games, bulletin boards	4
Gave ideas for teaching	3
Were nice, ran errands	3
Helped to locate tests	1
Finding idea books	1

Interpreting the category of "gave ideas for teaching" as consulting, the consulting function acquires more prominence when teachers are directly asked about their interaction with staff.

If we look at all of the interview data summarized thus far, four of the eight teachers seem to have used or want to use the consulting function. In contrast, each of the eight teachers has used the teacher center to make materials.

Consulting Sources for Teachers

Since our interview sample saw the teacher center as basically a materials resource, one might ask whether they were receptive to using other people as resources. In fact, other data suggests that teachers find consulting with other teachers an important source of help. (Huberman, 1980; Stevenson, 1981) In another question (question 7), teachers were asked to rate 7 sources of help as useful. While "teacher idea books" were rated as most useful, discussions with other teachers were rated next in usefulness. Teacher commented about finding their colleagues useful and these comments centered around finding other people in comparable situations who bring reality to the situation.

"A way in which to compare my situation with others," "That's the way you learn to teach," "Very useful, more relevant to classroom situation," "(You) find out how others coped," (same response given by two teachers) "Workshops from people not in the classroom (are not very useful) (same response given by two teachers.) "I would rather talk to someone from my own school who is familiar with my situation." Opinions of this type were given rather strongly by six of the eight interviewed teachers.

Summary and Expectations

In summary, the eight teachers who we interviewed seemed to view the teachers' center primarily as a materials resource for using machines and making games, bulletin boards, etc. While they were uniformly positive about center staff, they did not often spontaneously mention using or wishing to use them for specific ideas of innovations, rather than helping to deal with ongoing activities such as planning lessons or consulting about classroom management. In fact, many teachers responded, to these suggestions, that they already know how to teach. In contrast, teachers seemed more willing to consult with their teaching peers who were still in the classroom situation.

From these interviews, the following set of expectations were developed:

(1) Many initial requests in the active staffing process would center around concerns for materials.

(2) Teachers could easily be referred to other teachers for exchanges of ideas.

(3) It would be difficult for teachers to see CTC staff members as fellow teachers. They would tend to see them in a more supervisory role. Thus, it would be easy to fall into the trap of telling teachers what to do rather than fostering autonomous thinking.

THE DEFINING ELEMENTS OF ACTIVE STAFFING

In the following sections the actual active staffing process is described and analyzed. First, two principles guiding active staffing are

discussed. Then a central strategy building on teacher information is considered. Finally, the process is divided into three chronological steps: (1) identifying the concern; (2) active staffing intervention, and (3) maintaining contact.

Principles Guiding Active Staffing

There are overriding principles which guide every phase of active staffing. First, active staffing involves concentrating on ways of thinking about teaching rather than on the mere acquisition of new skills and materials. The aim of active staffing is to assist teachers in examining the teaching/learning process.

Many of the actions taken in active staffing are also taken in routine staffing, but the purpose is different. In routine teacher center staffing, the aim of staffing is to meet the teacher's needs, whatever they may be. In active staffing the aim is to have teachers examine their assumptions and techniques. Strategies used in active staffing are designed to raise questions that may lead to an examination of current practices and assumptions. Even when specific materials are suggested, usually in emergency situations, the design of the materials and the suggested ways of using them embody certain principles and philosophies which may become evident as teachers observe them in use. Whereas routine staffing ends at the point where teachers' requests or needs are met, active staffing seeks to engage the teacher in a process that may lead to professional growth.

The second guiding principle of active staffing is that teacher and staffer participate jointly in the problem solving process. We believe that in order for information to effect permanent growth and change, the meaning of this information must be thoroughly assimilated. This involves teacher involvement in problem solving activities. For this reason, active staffing must be a joint venture, teacher and staffer striving to work through an approach to teaching that can be internalized by the teacher. Although the staffer may be able to simply give advice and offer solutions, to do so would subvert the aim of active staffing. The staffer must be able to communicate her perception of the situation and to engage the teacher in joint exploration of the problem.

A Central Strategy: Building on Teacher Information

In too many staff development models, teachers are viewed as lacking information and skills. These programs are designed to remedy this deficit and improve teacher performance. In contrast, in the active staffing model, teachers are seen as professionals, who, in their practice, have acquired a wealth of knowledge and experience. The active staffing process seeks not only to bring this information to awareness, but to utilize it in making decisions about teaching strategies and materials.

Although teachers have extensive knowledge about children and teaching techniques, they are not always aware of how much they know, the value of that knowledge or how to utilize the knowledge. In active staffing, the teacher's knowledge becomes a resource which informs both staffer and the decision making process. The information provided becomes the data base of decisions and actions. As a result, teachers gain a sense of power because information they contribute is crucial to the process.

With this base, a peer relationship is established between the staffer and the teacher rather than an expert/student relationship. The effect of this relationship is to further encourage active participation by the teacher in the staffing process. Many examples of this strategy in operation are found in our data.

For example, as a kindergarten teacher who has no previous experience at that level expresses reservations about her children's ability to work independently. "My friends tell me not to let kindergarten children do things by themselves," she says. "Not to group, because they will just go wild." At the same time this teacher indicates a desire to meet children's individual needs. In response, the staffer asks questions designed to focus on the knowledge the teacher has about the children in her class. "Why don't we look at your class in terms of how competent you think they are?" "How many of them would you say are ready to sit and listen now?" When the teacher focuses on the children in this way, she decides that of the twenty-five children in her class only six of them are immature and unready. From this data, the teacher decides that the children may be able to work independently.

In another instance, 08 comes to the center for activities for a preschool class. She says she wants interesting activities so that the children will not get bored. The staffer suggests that the teacher first do a complete inventory of the classroom to determine what materials are available, and suggests that activities and experiences be planned around these materials. She then poses a number of questions for the teacher to think about before she returns. "What are the children presently doing in the activity areas already set up? What do you want the children to learn? How can we provision different areas so that the possibilities for learning are expanded?" When this teacher returns for another visit, she has done a complete inventory and has observed the children during activity periods. This information forms the basis for further discussion and planning.

The Phases of Active Staffing

Having described elements common to all phases of active staffing, we now will describe the temporal sequence of the process. Three phases of active staffing may be identified. These are (1) identifying the concern, (2) working through the issue, and (3) maintaining contact. In the sections which follow, these three phases are detailed.

IDENTIFYING THE CONCERN

The first phase in the active staffing process is to define a problem which the staff person and teacher can work on together. Often, teachers do not bring their concerns to TC staff in direct ways. We have identified three common situations in active staffing which are relevant to identifying the concern. These are (a) the distinction between manifest and latent concerns, (b) the need to focus concerns away from the teacher herself and toward the instructional situation, and (c) making a problem workable. This section deals with these three situations and techniques which may be used in active staffing.

Manifest/Latent Concern

Active staffing encounters often begin with a request for materials which meet teachers' practical curricular needs. In several of our initial encounters with teachers, we found that they came in to do activities which involved making bulletin boards, finding board games, and dittoing. (It should be noted that initial interviews showed that these were the activities most associated with a teachers' center).

These requests can be used as a starting point for active staffing. Often we found that underlying this type of request is a very deep concern about teaching. The skilled active staffer can use materials requests as a basis for identifying these deeper concerns. Some examples of this follow:

(1) 02, a newly assigned teacher to a class for emotionally disturbed adolescents presented herself as needing "to put up a bulletin board" and wanted some ideas.

This led to an active staffing encounter.

(2) 07, a teacher newly assigned to kindergarten, came in to ditto some materials. Further discussion showed that she had concerns about grouping children.

(3) Carmen came in to laminate materials. When asked if more help were needed, she wanted to make a science bulletin board. Further probing revealed that she felt unprepared to teach science.

(4) Another teacher wanted materials in memory improvement. Further discussion revealed that she was concerned about the poor skills of students in her class.

In order for these requests to lead to active staffing, however, they must be skillfully handled. The staffer must probe the teacher to determine what is behind the initial request. If this is not done, potential active staffing encounters are blocked.

In one example a staffer made precisely this error. A reading tutor came in for a board game. The staffer explained <u>all</u> aspects of this game (print, size, color, materials). However, the staffer never tried to assess <u>why</u> the tutor wanted this game. Later, when the staff jointly went over this

log, it was clear that the tutor had problems motivating the child. These might have been discussed and worked on jointly. However, the staffer, by focusing on the game and not on the rationale or reason for the request, misses an opportunity for an active staffing encounter,

Many teachers, of course, are not candidates for active staffing. It is important to distinguish between teachers who really only want materials and those with deeper concerns. Potential active staffing candidates often discuss concerns beyond their materials, alluding to problems and potential in their teaching situations. These teachers drop hints that they are examining their teaching methods and assumptions. For example:

> "She loses them in the afternoon and wants to improve there also...believes traditional approach is good for inner city kids"
>
> "She's having a difficult time making the adjustment to teaching"
>
> "Last year she got bored doing the same old things and wanted someone to rap with"
>
> "The kids have been complaining that they know the work; the book is so dull"

Although not all teachers who eventually become interested in active staffing express concerns in this way, such statements are tell-tale signs of an active staffing opportunity.

We have come to call the materials requests often shown in initial contacts "manifest" concerns. Such requests often hide deeper "latent concerns" which lead to active staffing. How does this skillful staff person uncover the latent concern?

First, the staff person must state the he/she is available for consultation. This availability itself encourages teachers to share their more general concerns about teaching.

A second technique is appropriate questioning. The staffer is interested in the teacher's school situation. This includes the grade placement and class, as well as the person's reactions and feelings to teaching. Through sympathetic listening, the teacher is encouraged to talk about the situation.

These two techniques highlight differences between active staffing and

routine staffing. The situation where a teacher makes a materials request of a staffer is a common one. But active staffing requires that the staffer listen to the teacher in particular ways. First, the active staffer must be concerned about the reasons which underlie a specific request. Second, the staffer must gather information and insight about the teaching situation. The active staffer must be a wise and receptive listener.

This distinction between active staffing and other types of staffing may be visually shown below:

Active Staffing manifest need ⟶ information gathering ⟶ latent need ⟶ action

General Staffing manifest need ⟶ action

It is important to note that the manifest concern should not be ignored in an effort to address deeper needs. In fact the teacher's manifest concern must be met. If a teacher came in to get a bulletin board he or she must leave with a bulletin board. Teachers come with needs which they feel are relevant to their problem, and they have found solutions which suit them. To ignore the initial request is an indirect statement to the teacher that the request is unworthy. The skillful active staffer meets the initial manifest need, however, in the process of meeting the request (finding the material, making the bulletin board) the staffer engages the teacher in further conversation which leads to the identification of more general issues. In the process, say, of making a bulletin board, the active staffer can engage the teacher in further conversation. Thus, manifest needs are met and other needs are explored.

What leads to this split between manifest and latent concerns? By what process does a teacher who is actually concerned about children's learning come to request a bulletin board of a ditto at a teachers' center? There are several possible explanations.

First, there is a tendency (among teachers and other professionals) to seek familiar and concrete solutions to complex problems. Dewey calls this reflexing rather than reflecting (1933). Since teaching is a day-to-day activity dealing with concrete materials and children, teachers may tend to

seek solutions which are familiar in form.

Second, the teachers' center itself may be viewed as a "make and take" center. This is certainly suspected by our interview data. In addition, new center users seem to be unfamiliar with the variety of functions a teachers' center serves. In our study, most teachers who showed a difference between manifest and latent concern were new center users. People who knew us, tended to bring their classroom problems up more directly for discussion.

Third, it must be admitted that teacher center staff are not always prepared to address deeper problems. The rush of time, feelings of inadequacy in an area of learning, or discomfort in fostering real dialogue with teachers leads staff members to miss active staffing opportunities.

In summary, we have found that there is often a difference between the concern brought to the staffer (the manifest concern) and the teacher's actual concern (the latent concern). The manifest concern must always be met. But in doing so, the staffer can probe behind the reasons for the request and, thus, create active staffing opportunities.

Focusing the Concern Outwards

When individuals are confronted with problems or are placed under stress, there is a natural tendency to react first in a personal way. Since many of our teachers were under some stress, we observed a tendency for them to focus upon their own personal reactions to their working situations rather than upon the learning problems of their children. Thus, they bring in the personal discomfort they experience from a problematic or stressful situation.

It has been noted that teachers move through certain stages of development in their thinking. For example, according to one account, beginning teachers focus on survival; later teachers feel competent with management and curriculum and focus on their students and on long range goals. The mature teacher focuses upon children's thinking. (Watts, 1980). However, we have noticed that even an advanced teacher's developmental level may regress radically if faced with a stressful situation. Many of our

active staffing encounters involved teachers under stress, thus they typically presented their personal feelings as the first "problem." The following excerpts from our active staffing data illustrate this:

"I'm desperate...I have 15 years of experience in preschool and now I've been transferred"

"I got so bored doing the same old thing."

"I've blanked out what I learned in college."

"I really need stroking today."

Predictably, when people experience personal discomfort they fall back on beliefs rather than actually inspecting the situation before them. One teacher placed in an unfamiliar bilingual situation states, "I feel that this is America. I'm loyal to my country, these kids need English."

Another teacher, trying to cope with kindergarten says "I say kids have to learn to be quiet and sit still. I really need a lot of order before I can teach."

In order to move to active staffing, the teacher's concern must be refocused away from himself or herself and toward the children. Beliefs and personal feelings tend to be rigid -- may even become obsessive -- and they need to be tested using the outside world, the world they are meant to deal with. In addition, when teachers focus upon their own role, they may begin to unjustly see themselves as inadequate. Focusing upon the children and their learning processes enables teachers to replace this static posture with positive, outward reaching plans. Rather than dwelling on static personal opinions, the active staffer reassures teachers by focusing directly upon a manageable problem and working toward a solution.

Of the nine teachers that Inez had active staffing encounters with, six initially presented their own problems. The remaining three were able to more immediately to focus upon the children. We may say, in general, that active staffing attempts to refocus concern upon children and their instructional situation. The many ways in which this is done are detailed in the next section.

Making a Problem Workable

Too often the problems and issues presented by teachers are not well defined. These issues may be so broadly conceived that it is difficult to know where and how to begin. For example, teachers who suddenly find themselves placed in unfamiliar situations such as different grade levels or new schools, can be overwhelmed by the scope and complexity of the change.

One technique used in the active staffing process is to assist the teacher in narrowing the scope of the problem by focusing on a manageable portion which can be easily addressed by teacher and staffer. An example of this strategy taken from the logs, involves a teacher (06) who has just been reassigned from a pre-school position held for 15 years, to a remedial "pull-out program" where she is responsible for teaching reading to primary grade children. She tells the staffer she is "desperate" because "I don't know how to begin." The staffer attempts to translate the overall situation into a problem that can immediately be worked on. "Well, let's list what you want to teach in the next two weeks and think of ways you can cover the skills. With the concern now objectified and limited in time to two weeks, the teacher and staffer proceed to plan how to meet immediate day-to-day needs for activities.

Another teacher (02) reports being nervous about the prospect of teaching a classroom of behaviorally disordered teenagers. To focus upon a workable problem Inez asks the teacher to state an objective for the first week of school, thus narrowing the concern and defining it into a workable form.

WORKING THROUGH THE PROBLEM

After the teacher and staffer define a viable problem or issue, the phase of working through the problem begins. During this phase, teachers often exhibit marked changes in their thinking about teaching.

An excellent example of this is 05, the teacher who has been reassigned to the kindergarten level. On her first visit, the primary objective for this teacher was to teach the children how to line up, sit still, and raise their hands. By the third visit the data show that this teacher's focus

is changing. She brings in a prescribed learning task that her children are having difficulty with and the staffer and teacher analyze the task. The teacher decides to change it so that it is more appropriate for young children. She also reports that through observing her children she gets information about what they appear to know. In the fifth encounter the teacher actually suggests materials to make children more independent. In the sixth she brings in an instructional task that the children could not solve and works jointly with the staffer on the reasons for this, making a decision about her subsequent instructional strategies. Over time, through the active staffing process, her concerns change from keeping order to a focus on formulating and solving instructional problems. She becomes engaged in seeking independent activities for the children. Rather than blandly accepting solutions from Inez, she is now independently posing options and alternatives and jointly discussing strategies.

There are many techniques which the active staffer used to facilitate the working through of the problem solving process (or the instructional issue). More than one way can be used with any given teacher. Five techniques that we have identified for working through the problem are: brainstorming, suggesting specific activities, suggesting instructional principles, suggesting use of outside resources, and addressing personal teaching concerns.

Brainstorming

In brainstorming, the teacher and staffer think of as many solutions to a problem as possible. At least two principles characterize the use of brainstorming. First, it is used with teachers who are actively seeking ideas. Secondly, brainstorming is used as a method of engaging the teacher in the solution-seeking process. To appreciate this, the method of brainstorming must be contrasted with simply giving the teacher activities, a method which solves the immediate problem or concern, but which fails to give the teacher the tools or confidence for dealing with the problem on a continued basis.

An example of brainstorming is given in the case of (04), a new teacher

assigned to a classroom without materials. (04) states she is "lost" in several areas, including discipline, routines, and how to teach academic subjects. First, to narrow and define the question, Inez asked her to define: "What areas are you interested in knowing about." The teacher answers, "reading, phonics, math." Inez then suggests brainstorming -- "Well, let's pretend you are in a country school and you don't have any commercial materials, what could we do (Inez continues with a first idea). I'll start, we have lots of magazines, maybe they could cut out or tear pictures of objects which begin or end with certain sounds. They could also draw pictures and label them." With this level of specificity, the teacher is able to contribute ideas to the brainstorming process.

Two additional aspects of this interaction may be noted. First, the prodigious attempts made to define the question so that the teacher can deal with it. Because of the considerable anxiety of the teacher, Inez takes care to define the question very specifically, even starting out the brainstorming activities to show the direction they might take. Second, Inez, tries to relieve the teacher's anxiety by placing the brainstorming in another context. She asks the teacher to think of what she would do if she were in a country school.

In another example, (01), a confident teacher is actively seeking ideas for making a study of the history of the Civil War period less "dull." She knows the problem but doesn't have a reference for solution. Inez gives her such a reference and then engages her through brainstorming "Let's get some paper and think of all the ways the civil war and reconstruction could be related to what is happening today."

Suggesting Activities

Most teachers engaging in active staffing are looking for activities. At times, the appropriate active staffing technique is to provide these activities. However, this technique should be used judiciously as it can be too directive and may not lead to the interchange that facilitates teacher growth. Suggesting activities that stimulate teacher observation and growth will be discussed in this section.

In active staffing activities for learning are given after teachers have identified a specific problem. That is, they are given after a considerable amount of interaction has taken place.

The types of activities which are suggested also have certain characteristics. They are often done to persuade or illustrate to the teacher that certain things are possible -- for example, that children can be taught higher level math concepts or that they can be actively engaged in learning. Because these activities are meant to persuade, they often by their nature, involve the teacher in observing children. Finally, they almost always use teacher constructed materials which are free or inexpensive. In this way, teachers can see that their activities need not be limited to what is commercially available.

Examples of using this technique are given below:

(1) A beginning teacher (02) is working with emotionally disturbed adolescents. Inez asks the teacher to identify her objective for the first week of class. She responds, "for the kids to identify that the room is theirs and ours." Inez then explicitly links this objective to the teacher's initial (or manifest) concern about making a bulletin board, suggesting a specific activity that the kids could make a sign that says, "Welcome To Our Classroom", and put their names under it. A month later, after several active staffing encounters, the teacher has other concerns, "they are slow and I don't think they are retarded. They haven't learned what they should." Inez asks about math and the teacher can now readily give observations. "They count on their fingers. Some of them don't seem to understand multiplication." Once again Inez suggests activities and states the purpose of these activities, "Here are some activities you can do that will develop math concepts." Inez then suggests graphing and the use of concrete materials. Later in the active staffing process, Brenda expresses concern about spelling. Inez then gives her spelling strategies to use during story writing.

(2) Activities were also suggested for the teacher 05 reassigned to kindergarten. In the second active staffing encounter, Inez suggests activities. These are given in response to the frustration

not having enough commercial material.

The teacher nkows and can actually recite the objectives for the year but is unfamiliar with kindergarten level children and informal strategies for such children. Because the teacher is fearful of giving the children too much freedom and letting them run wild, Inez couches the activities in terms of the teacher's stated objectives. "Let's talk about activities and materials and some strategies you could use to help them learn th things they need to know." The activities are, however, individualized and encourage children to work independently." These activities also give the teacher an opportunity to observe the childre. As this teacher progresses, she slowly loses her sense of discomfort about the independent work. Further along in the active staffing she states "my kids are really learning." Inez gently urges her to implement more active learning activities and she follows willingly, sometimes even taking the lead, even though she still expresses some uneasiness about children working independently. "I let one child do the sorting game we made and one child do the number matching and that worked O.K., but I don't know about too many." Inez and the teacher now have the same goals, fostering independent learning. But the teacher, unfamiliar with these techniques, must go slowly.

(3) The third illustration of a teacher for whom activities are supplied is 01 , an experienced teacher in a new situation, teaching learning disabled children in a suburban setting. 01 has come with a desire to make social studies interesting. "I have a list of topics here that I want to do more with. I chose them from the topics we have studied." The topics I chose are ones the children asked questions about." In reply to this rather sophisticated opening, Inez suggests addtional activities. These included linking the Civil War and Reconstruction to current events, and including asking higher level questions as a strategy to develop critical thinking abilities.

Suggesting Instructional Principles

When working with teachers, it is important that they become aware of the instructional principles that underlie the strategies they are using. If instructional principles are not discussed, teachers may be unable to extend the implications of their activities and generalize them to new situations. We believe that a discussion of instructional pinciples is essential to consciously engaging teachers in the active staffing process. There are sound and unsound principles in teaching, and active staffing attempts to move teachers toward sounder practices. Hence, Inez often states for teachers the principles she is trying to use. These principles have included, for example, working with kindergarten children in groups (rather than as a whole class), helping adolescents to feel comfortable, discussing class rules with children, and the function of using the native language in teaching reading to bilingual students. In the active staffing process, Inez makes sure that these principles are stated clearly for the teacher. For the most part, teachers either have initially shared in formulating these principles or soon come to share them. Inez is consistent in developing instructional principles in depth in her encounters with any given teacher. Generally, she and the teacher chose one theme or principle and evolve it continuously over the active staffing sessions. For example, Inez and 05 worked for three months to implement the principle of having children work more independently.

Suggesting Outside Resources

Outside sources can serve important functions in the active staffing process. First, outside resources can often supply information the staffer does not have. Second, teachers may be particularly receptive to information from other classroom teachers. In the interviews collected before the active staffing period, we noted that teachers prefer to receive advice from other teachers, who presumably have similar situations and share the same constraints.

At one point, 05 , the teacher reassigned to kindergarten, was

was asked to go to a workshop given by an experienced kindergarten teacher. This workshop contained a videotaped illustration of a working kindergarten class. 05 found this very informative and adopted many of the suggestions given. The workshop also assured 05 that "she was on the right track herself in her kindergarten classroom."

Resources may not always be people. 03 , an experienced teacher, was newly assigned to a bilingual room. She was unfamiliar with the philosophy and guidelines of bilingual education. Inez gave her a research article to read and obtained the Chicago guidelines for bilingual education for her. In addition, Peggy, a university faculty member on the staff was called in to discuss bilingual education with 03.

Addressing Personal Teacher Concerns

When a close relationship has developed between staffer and teacher, the teacher often feels comfortable enough to bring in personal concerns about teaching to the staffer. Sometimes these personal concerns become overwhelming and the active staffer must help the teacher deal with them. This happened in two situations.

In one, the teacher was concerned with a rather assertive co-teacher in a bilingual setting. Although forced into a team-teaching situation, neither had any preparation for it. Inez helped this teacher deal with ways of coping with this situation.

In another situation, 05 had been asked to teach an afterschool class. She came in to discuss how she could tactfully refuse this assignment. Inez helped her to gather the courage to say "no."

MAINTAINING CONTACT

The final phase of the active staffing process is maintaining continued contact with the teacher. Since coming to the teachers' center is voluntary, we want teachers to feel motivated to pay us continued visits so that the active staffing process may evolve. We also want to engage the interest and trust of the teachers so that we may help them grow professionally.

Several factors play a part in maintaining this continued contact. These include maintaining a suitable staffing schedule. These are also factors in the active staffing interaction which encourage continued contact. One of these is respecting the teacher's level of knowledge and readiness for active staffing. Another is the staffer's ability to express constructive disagreement. These are discussed below.

The Staffing Schedule

If a continuous active staffing relationship is to develop, it is important that the staffing be done on a dependable schedule. Teachers knew that Inez was present on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and planned their schedules accordingly. It is also important that the Teachers' Center free time for the staffer to work with teachers. Concerns such as setting up equipment, laminating, and collecting materials from people can severely limit the time available for active staffing. We found that, in our center, sufficient time could only be guaranteed by supplying an aide to handle these concerns at the center.

Respecting the Teachers' Level

A staffer who is experienced in innovative techniques or who no longer has direct instructional responsibilities to children may find it difficult to appreciate the effort involved in examining classroom practices and beliefs. Perhaps this is why teachers prefer to get advice from others in the same situation.

We have found that a key in successful active staffing is appreciating and respecting the teacher's current level of understanding and knowledge. It is both personally and professionally threatening to change, and the teacher's efforts to do this, and the personal integrity that underlies these efforts, must be appreciated. The active staffer must show considerable empathy for the teacher who is attempting to reexamine her own teaching strategies. Supporting the teacher's effort to change involves

a large amount of sensitivity to the teacher's readiness and receptivity for the staffer's suggestions. A teacher may, at a given time, need to wait before proceeding to examine teaching assumptions or try new activities.

When teachers are new to the active staffing process, the staffer can provide support by recognizing the validity of the teacher's reservations. Examples of how Inez does this follow:

Inez has been presenting 05, the reassigned kindergarten teacher, with ideas that have been used by another teacher successfully. 05 protests, "she must have a lot of supplies then. How can I do that with nothing?" In truth, these activities do not depend upon materials, but Inez, realizing perhaps that this teacher is feeling challenged, draws back and says: "Right now, I don't think you can, but if we start to choose some things and make them, eventually you will have enough by the time you think the children are ready."

08, a new teacher assigned to preschool is planning instructional strategies with Inez. So far, she says, she has simply been following the previous teacher's lesson plans, given to her by the principal. Inez responds, "This is your first week? Then you're probably better off following the regular schedule and seeing what you have."

One of the most interesting encounters of this type is 03, a teacher newly assigned to a bilingual situation. Through several encounters of varying natures, 03 is exposed to the philosophy of the bilingual program, a philosophy which she personally doesn't agree. After several encounters of absorbing information which clashes with her feelings, 03 rebels. She has been given an article on bilingual education to read and Inez asks for her reaction. "Inez, can I be honest with you? I think that it's O.K. to read research but I think you can prove anything you want with research. You just design the research so you get the results you want."

Inez answers, "Well, I can understand how you feel and I accept your feelings...If you don't trust the validity of the results then it certainly can't be useful to you."

Expressing Constructive Disagreement

Occasionally a position will be taken by a teacher with which the

staffer must, in good conscience, disagree. A dilemma develops: the staffer does not want to express outright disagreement and thereby risk alienating the teacher; On the other hand, the active staffer cannot be a hypocrite. There are two different strategies to cope with such instances -- one is generally used with teachers the staffer is unfamiliar with; another is used with teachers who have already embarked on the active staffing process.

For teachers who are initiating contact, disagreement is generally simply limited to acknowledging and restating the teacher's feelings, thus avoiding taking any stance on the issue. Examples given below:

(1) 09, an experienced teacher reassigned to first grade will not tolerate board game activities. "Well, I don't want any board games. I think that if I showed the game, my kids would go wild." Rather than committing herself one way or the other, Inez merely acknowledges his feelings. "Well, I don't feel board games should be used if you don't feel comfortable with them."

(2) In another example, 05 states "The parents aren't too happy with me because I say the kids have to learn how to be quiet and sit still. Don't you think that's right, Inez?" Recognizing this teacher's fragility, Inez tries merely to reflect her feelings. "Well, they certainly can't learn very much if they can't sit down." The teacher is encouraged, "Yeah, that's what I say."

A different technique is used when teachers are more experienced with active staffing. In this case, the teacher's thinking and assumptions may be gently challenged, thereby piquing interest and encouraging the teacher to reconsider a decision or conclusion. This technique should only be used when rapport has already been established. Examples of this follow:

(1) When 05 is well into the active staffing process, she says "My friends tell me not to let kindergarten children do things by themselves. Not to group because they will just go wild, and I can't stand noise. I must have order. What do you think of that, Inez?" Inez answers, "I think that if structured properly it's possible to group in kindergarten but activities have to be carefully chosen." In this way, we raise the possibility of further discussion about

about this issue.

(2) A teacher in a bilingual situation, 03, has established an ongoing relationship with Inez. The teacher states her personal opinions, "I feel that this is America. I'm loyal to my country... She (the other teacher) insists that they learn Spanish first... This confuses the kids." Inez gently raises the possibility of other viewpoints. "Well, I don't know a lot about the goals of that program either, so after we talked I asked Peggy Richek about the philosophy and she said she has some articles we can read that explain the philosophy." By consulting with other people who can supply information about his topic, Inez is raising the possibility of other perspectives on this subject. This gives the teacher an opportunity to eventually reconsider her point of view.

Summary of Active Staffing Elements

In summary, several elements contribute to a description of active staffing. Two principles guide active staffing. These are: (1) active staffing involves ways of thinking about teaching rather than the mere acquisition of new teaching skills and materials; (2) active staffing requires the joint participation of the staffer and the teacher. A strategy central to all phases of the active process is building on teacher knowledge, and the information a teacher supplies becomes the basis of the decision making process. Active staffing can be divided into three phases. These are (1) identifying the concern, (2) working through the issue, and (3) maintaining contact.

MEASURING THE EFFECT OF ACTIVE STAFFING

Although the primary purpose of this study was to define the active staffing process, the format of the study permits us to teach some tentative conclusions about the effects of active staffing on teachers' professional growth and attitudes. The reader will recall that a sample of

eight center users were interviewed by phone before the initiation of the the process. (The results of these interviews have been summarized earlier.) In addition, eight of the nine teachers involved with Inez in the active staffing process were interviewed by telephone after the active staffing period had been completed. (The ninth teacher had only one, rather brief encounter with Inez.)

In this section, the teachers' responses in the interviews following active staffing are summarized and interpreted. These interviews are compared with those obtained before the active staffing was initiated. Henceforth, interviews gathered before the active staffing period will be referred to as "pre-interviews;" and those gathered after the active staffing period will be called "post-interviews."

The questions in the post-interviews overlap somewhat with those in the pre-interviews. This was done to detect potential changes in teacher attitude and evidence of teacher growth. However, it should be noted that the two groups of teachers interviewed are not comparable. While the first group were general center users, the second group consisted of teachers who were interested in participating in active staffing. Two of the teachers, in fact, were interviewed in both the pre- and post-assessments.

When interpreting the post-interviews, it is important to note that three of these teachers (03, 06, 07) had only one substantive encounter with Inez. All other teachers saw her more often, ranging from two to eleven times.

Topics addressed in this analysis include (1) services used at the center, (2) contact with staff and their content, (3) consulting activities with staff that teachers would find valuable and (4) teachers' summary comments.

Services Used at the Center

When compared to the pre-interviews, the post-interviews show a marked increase in the use of consulting services. These statistics are summarized below for both the pre- and post-interviews.

	# of teachers pre-interview	# of teachers post-interview
Materials Resource		
Using Machines	6	5
Making Materials	7	7
Borrowing Materials	0	1
Consulting Resource		
Using books or displays for ideas	1	3
Consulting with staff	1	4
Other		
Brought class to center	1	0
Comradeship	1	0
Counseling source for self	1	1
Staff member visited class	0	1
Workshops	0	1

The post-interviews reveal that there has been a sharp rise in teachers' consciousness of using the center for consulting. When asked an initial free response question about their use of the center, four spontaneously replied that they have consulted with the staff. In actual fact, each teacher has consulted with Inez at least once, and all mention this interaction at this point or at a later point in the interview. This data shows that teachers are either consulting more with staff or are more conscious of this consulting. The data also imply that, in the pre-interviews, several teachers may have actually used the consulting function, but did not mention this experience. Perhaps the wording of this question, "What services have you used at the center" lead teachers to mention materials used, rather than their interactions with staff.

Activities Consulting With Staff and Their Content

When asked directly whether they had talked with staff and the subject of their interactions, each of the eight teachers remembered consulting with Inez. This question was also asked in a free response format. Once again, the pre-interviews are compared with the post-interviews to determine whether there were changes in the types of staff aid provided.

	# of teachers pre-interview	# of teachers post-interview
*Locating supplies, helping with machines	4	2
Helping with games, bulletin boards	4	4
Gave ideas for teaching	3	3
Were nice, ran errands	3	2
Helped to locate games	1	1
Finding idea books	1	0
Helped with curriculum development	0	6
Attended classes at center	0	1

*Data analyzes interactions with all staff members

The two sets of data contrast markedly. For the first time, the category "helped with curriculum" appears. Six of the eight teachers who have been actively involved with Inez characterize their involvement as curriculum development. Not only is this type of consulting mentioned, but it is described in great depth. Excerpts from these interviews highlight the greater involvement:

01 I initially went for ideas in books; I explained about

my new job; whe (Inez) pointed out books and offered her services. I went to her later -- she gave me supplements to reading and hleped me to break down the curriculum and gave alternatives to regular education

03 Inez helped me understand how bilingual classrooms should work.

*04 Helped with individualizing instruction.

06 talked to Inez about setting up a kindergarten program. Talked to her initially and then did it myself

07 ...curriculum planning

Areas In Which Teachers Find Consultation Useful

The next question was partially repeated from the pre-interviews. Teachers were given a list of activities and asked whether they had pursued them with center staff. If they had pursued them, they were asked to rate the activities as "very useful, somewhat useful, or not at all useful." The responses range from one to three, with lower numbers being more positive responses. Means for the post-interviews are given below:

Choose learning materials	1.38
Develop teacher strategies	1.5
Consulting about classroom management	2.25
Developing lesson plans	1.5
Consul ing about discipline	2.38
Discussing child development	2.1
Sharing research	2.38
Looking at learning problems	1.88

*Underlined words were not actually spoken, but were added to construct sensible sentences.

Because in general, the teachers on the post-interview gave lower ratings to these activities than the teachers on the pre-interview sample, these figures are not directly comparable. However, if we compare the rank order of the responses for pre-and post-interviews, we see changes in teacher priorities. These are given below.

	Rank Order pre-interview	Rank Order post-interview
Choosing learning materials	1	1
Developing teaching strategies	4	2½
Consulting about classroom management	4	8
Developing lesson plans	8	2½
Discussing child development	7	5
Consulting about discipline	6	6½
Sharing research on teaching	2	6½
Looking at learning problems	4	4

*Disruption in normal rank order was due to "tied" scores

Comparing the pre-interviews to the post-interviews, "choosing learning materials" is rated most useful in both rankings. However, in the post-interviews, the topics of working with center staff on "developing teaching strategies" and "developing lesson plans" have been rated far more highly than in the pre-interviews. In the post interviews, they are tied for second place (ranking 2½). In the pre-interviews they were rated at fourth place (tied, 3, 4, 5) and at last place. On the other hand, "discussing research" was rated highly in the pre-interviews, but poorly in the post-interviews.

These changes indicate that teachers who participated in active staffing came to see center staff less as supervisors or academics and more like fellow peer teachers who could help them with formulating teaching activities and curriculum.

To verify this, note that serveral teachers in the pre-interviews expressed the opinion that only other teachers in their building, who know their situation, could effectively help them. However, two teachers in the post-interview gave unsolicited comments that teacher center staff were more helpful than teachers and other staff in their buildings, and that teacher center staff could be consulted without fear of reprisal.

Teachers' Summary Comments

The last questions on the post-interview concerned how teachers felt they had changed and how CTC staff had helped them. We will let excerpts from these comments, followed by our interpretation, convey the flavor of the active staffing experience.

01 I've become more thoughtful about teaching...broadened my repertoire. (Teacher saw Inez two times to discuss teaching history to learning disabled children)

02 Inez is very inspiring. She tells me about her experience. I find that learning can be a lot of fun. (Teacher consulted with Inez six times on teaching emotionally disturbed adolescents)

03 New insight into newest teaching...like idea that Inez and Peggy who teach at Northeastern are there to consult informally. (Teacher consulted with Inez five times about bilingual situation in which she was uncomfortable)

04 Most useful thing is looking at the variety of activities you can copy. (Teacher consulted with Inez only once and thereafter came back only to work independently on materials. Teacher was new teacher, put into a classroom without formal materials)

05 The experience didn't affect my way of thinking because I'm pretty much in agreement with their philosophy. I like having a sounding board. (This teacher, reassigned to a kindergarten consulted eleven times with Inez. We believe that her way of thinking was profoundly affected, and that she has now so thoroughly assimilated another point of view that she believes she has always had it)

06 I was floundering. I came up and found the right people to help me...Inez gave me concrete ideas and ways of implementing them. (This teacher, newly assigned from preschool to a reading pull out program in primary grades, saw Inez only once).

07 I liked the triwall construction. Interesting about how Inez talked about getting children involved. (These comments do not relate to active staffing. Inez saw this teacher for active staffing only once)

08 Informal teaching is as important as formal teaching... emphasis should be placed on teaching in a nonstructured situation. Being creative is important. Staff/Inez helped by the information concerning teaching and things you can get across. (This teacher was new to a preschool situation and saw Inez two times.)

Summarizing the information collected from the interview, we conclude that the active staffing experience had far reaching effects on several of these teachers. This is revealed by their perceptions of their center activities, the nature of their consulting experience, the way in which they think center staff can help them, and their statements of change in their thinking. Overall, teachers are more anxious for consulting services centering around curriculum. They feel that their knowledge of curriculum has been broadened and deepened. They feel comfortable about consulting with center staff.

The active staffing process appears to have affected six of the eight teachers interviewed. The remaining two teachers (04, 07), each of whom saw Inez only once, remain unaffected.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that some teachers with only minimal consultation with Inez report significant changes as a result of the interactions. Teachers 01 and 08 saw Inez only twice, and teacher 06 consulted only once. However, each of these three teachers report that the experience has affected them profoundly. Apparently the teacher's readiness for the active staffing process and the nature of the active staffing interaction are more important than the duration of the active staffing experience.

DESCRIPTIONS OF INDIVIDUAL TEACHERS INVOLVED IN ACTIVE STAFFING

In designing the research project, there was an expectation that the participating teachers would represent a range of teaching experience. It was our belief that this kind of sample would provide information not only about the active staffing process, but would also reveal how the process might vary in relation to teacher experience or developmental level. Although all

experience levels were represented in the group of teachers who were involved in active staffing, there was an unexpected finding which affected the interactions. Each of the teachers in this study was faced with a new teaching situation. The six experienced teachers had all been reassigned to new and unfamiliar teaching situations, and the three other teachers were in their first teaching assignments. Perhaps as a result of this situation, eight of the nine teachers in this study evidenced feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and stress. Even teachers with several years of experience often exhibited behavior typical of new teachers.

A brief description of each teacher follows.

01, who lost her job with the Chicago Public school system at the beginning of the school year because of budget cut-backs, is an experienced teacher who has found employment as a resource teacher in the suburbs. She is working with 7th and 8th graders with learning disabilities. The children are mainstreamed most of the day, but 01 pulls out groups to which she teaches language arts, math, science or social studies. She is most concerned about finding more interesting activities for social studies. She describes the text book as "dull" and wants to make the lessons more lively and relevant to the children. Since 01 already has some ideas about how she would like to proceed, the staffer brainstorms with her helping to expand these ideas and find audio visual materials which would be appropriate and add variety to the instructional program. In two encounters the staffer and 01 discuss the importance of the level of teachers' questions and the development of critical thinking skills. Strategies were worked out that would permit 01 to relate historical events to current events. Of all the experienced teachers who participated in active satffing, 01 was one of the least stressed and the most advanced developmentally. She came in with very definite ideas about what she needed and took a leading role in the interaction.

02, a recent college graduate, comes to the center to find a

bulletin board idea. She is about to begin her first teaching assignment with teenagers at a special school for the behaviorly disordered. Since 02 is unsure about which bulletin board idea to choose, the staffer asks her what her first week's objective is. She states she wants to get to know the children and them to get to know her and create a comfortable working relationship with them. The staffer suggests that the students participate in putting up a bulletin board about themselves. Six encounters follow including a classroom visit by the staffer, at 02's request. Over time, 02 and Inez discuss alternative reading strategies such as language experience, the use of math manipulatives to develop math concepts and the advantage of teaming children for learning activities. Brenda develops skill at observing the children and changing teaching strategies to better suit their needs.

03, an experienced teacher, came to the center to discuss her new assignment to a bilingual team teaching situation. She was very anxious because she had no previous experience or knowledge about the bilingual teaching philosophy. There had been no meetings between herself and her team teacher and 03 was confused about her role in the classroom. The several subsequent active staffing encounters document the attempt by 03 to arrange a meeting with her team teacher which fails and the attempts by the staffer to help 03 understand this kind of education by supplying her with research findings and finally the Board of Education guidelines. These interactions are interesting because the teacher finally rejects the research findings and states that she actually disagrees with teaching children in a foreign language. She feels they should learn English.

04, a new teacher, came in after the first day of school quite upset. She needed concrete activities to "keep the kids busy" until the text books were delivered. Although she was a recent college graduate, she confessed that she had "blanked out" and didn't remember any of the materials or activities which she learned about in school. The critical strategy used by the staffer in this encounter was to

involve the teacher in a brainstorming session which gave her an opportunity to recall what she knew, helping her to regain some of her self-confidence. This was a one-time encounter.

05, an experienced teacher has been assigned two half-day classes. One is a kindergarten and the other a learning disabled group with children from grades kindergarten through eighth. Her previous teaching experience has been with regular children in grade 3 and up. 05 is uncomfortable with very young children and expresses concern about her limited knowledge of kindergarten. Her first concern is expressed about classroom organization and management. She feels that kindergarten children are not ready to do much and must be trained to line up, follow directions, sit still, and raise hands before she can start an instructional program. 05's active staffing encounters take place over a three month period. With 05, the active staffing experience centers on giving her activities to use which convince her that kindergarten children can learn through independent and active involvement. In addition, to discussions with the staffer, she attends a workshop given by an experienced fellow kindergarten teacher. 05 has set up a more flexible and creative program in her kindergarten by the time she is once again transferred.

06, a teacher with 15 years experience in preschool has been reassigned as a reading teacher of primary age childre. She comes in the first week of school and describes her condition as desperate. She needs materials she can use immediately. Her program requires that she take groups out of seven classrooms and work with them on specific reading skills. She is concerned about her ability to transfer her knowledge of pre-school materials to activities for primary age children. Inez helps her to realize that her years of experience can be applied to the new situation. Although 06 only talks to Inez once, 06 feels in the post-interview that Inez has "saved her life."

07, an experienced teacher, came in with concerns about being transferred from teaching a second grade to a kindergarten. She did not have materials and felt she could not group the children for independent work because she did not have an aide. Although she was excited about having someone to talk with about these problems, she wanted to get started at school first, and come back after about two weeks. 07 never returned to consult with Inez.

08 has just been assigned to her first job as a pre-school teacher. She comes in with her experienced teacher assistant to get some ideas. They are concerned about the long day the children spend in school and fear that they may get bored. The teacher assistant says that the children have been doing the same activities for a long time. Although the room is set up in several activity areas, the teacher is unsure exactly what the children are doing in those areas and what materials are available in the room. In order to establish a knowledge base for planning, the staffer asks the teacher to inventory the equipment and materials in the room, observe what the children are doing in the different activity areas and think about what she wants them to learn. With this information it was possible to begin a planning process to expand the possibilities for learning in that setting.

09 is an experienced parochial school teacher. His first encounter at the center is with a staff person who refers him to Inez. His teaching experience has been with upper grade children but this year he has agreed to teach a first grade. He is looking for materials to use with them but is very anxious about classroom control. He wants materials that will engage the child's attention but will not cause behavior problems. He is sure that his children would "go wild" if they were given any board games. Inez sees 09 only one time.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ACTIVE STAFFING

In this concluding section, we would like to address the issue of what type of a center staff person can effectively guide the active staffing process. The original plan of our study included training all staff members at our center to be "active staffers." However, this plan had to be abandoned when it became clear that active staff techniques could not be acquired in a short period of time.

Active staffing requires considerable skills in personal interaction. The staffer must be willing to cooperate with teachers, while leading them to an often far away, subtle goal. The successful active staffer does not say all the things that come to mind, but allows teachers to take the lead in making observations and drawing conclusions. It is important that the staff person not overwhelm the teacher with concerns which, at any point in the process, are irrelevant to the teaceher's perceptions of her needs. The active staffer must be willing to cooperate enthusiastically in activities which seem almost irrelevant to the ultimate goals of active staffing (laminating, making bulletin boards), while all the while directing teachers to share in and value these ultimate goals.

Active staffers need not be experts in all curriculum areas. In fact it may be desirable to let the teacher know that staff members have things to learn too. However, it is important for the staff person to not be embarrassed by her own lack of knowledge. Instead, it should be viewed as a positive experience to learn.

Perhaps most importantly, the staffer must realize that active staffing is a process whose ultimate goal is teacher independence.

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APPENDICES

ACTIVE STAFFING REPORT

Name of Staff Person _____ Name of Center User _____

Date _____ Job Title: _____

Duration _____ Grade Level _____

Who Initiated Interaction _____ School _____

Used Center Before _____ # of Visits _____ Reason for Visit _____
(Check sign in sheet)

Contact With You Before: _____ Describe _____

Record of Interaction:

Revised 9/81 (IW)

PREINTERVIEW FORMAT

First, I'd like to ask you some questions about how you use the center.

1. What services have you used at the center during the past school year?

2. Are there other services available at CTC that you might like to use in the future?
   yes....(ASK A).....1
   no.....2
   A. What services are those?

3. Has the staff been helpful?
   yes....(ASK A) 1
   no.....2
   A. Could you give me an example? (PROBE: Could you give me another example?)

4. Do you have any suggestions about (other) ways the staff could help you?

5. Other people have suggested some things the center staff could do for them How useful would you find the following things. Would you find the staff READ CATEGORY BELOW very useful, somewhat useful, or not at all useful?

	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not at all Useful
a. Helping you to choose learning materials.	1	2	3
b. Working with you to develop teaching strategies.	1	2	3
c. Consulting with you about classroom management.	1	2	3
d. Working with you to develop lessons.	1	2	3
e. Discussing child development issues that might affect your classroom.	1	2	3
f. Consulting with you about discipline.	1	2	3
g. Sharing new research on teaching methods with you.	1	2	3
h. Helping you look at learning problems in new ways.	1	2	3

6. Do you have ano further comments on these suggestions?

Now I'd like to explore your ideas about teaching.

7. People find different things useful in teaching. Have you found any of the following things useful?

	yes	no
a. teacher idea books (eg., Spice)	1	2
b. teacher magazines (eg., Instructor, Learning)	1	2
c. discussions with other teachers	1	2
d. books or articles about teaching	1	2
e. university courses	1	2
f. in-services	1	2
g. workshops or conferences	1	2

FOR EACH YES RECORDED, ASK: How have you found READ CATEGORY useful?

8. Is there any other resource, including people, that you find useful in your teaching?

yes....(ASK A).....1
no.....2

A. What or who is that (PROBE: Is there anything or anyone else?)

9. Even though teachers don't necessarily talk about it, their teaching often reflects a philosophy or theory about how children learn. Do you have an underlying theory or philosophy?

yes....(ASK A).....1
no.....2

A. Could you explain a bit more?

10. We have one last question to ask you. Did your principal have any influence on your use of the center?

yes....(ASK A).....1
no.....2

A. How?

POSTINTERVIEW FORMAT

First, I'd like to ask you some questions about how you use the center.

1. What services have you used at the center since September?

2. CTC has attempted to expand its services in staff consulting. Have you consulted with the staff since September?
   yes....(ASK A).....1
   no.....2
   A. Do you remember who you talked to? (PROBE: Did you talk to anyone else?)
   B. Could you describe what you talked to READ NAME about? ASK FOR EACH NAME MENTIONED IN A.

3. Did you find (this/these) conversation(s) useful in teaching?
   yes....(ASK A).....1
   no.....2
   A. Could you describe how (they/it) (was/were) useful?

4. Some of this may be repititious, but please bear with me. Have you talked to staff members about READ EACH UNDERLINED CATEGORY?
   IF YES: Did you find the staff READ CATEGORY very useful, somewhat useful, or not at all useful?

	A. Yes	No	B. Very Use.	Somewhat Use.	Not at all
a. Helping you to choose learning materials	1	2	1	2	3
b. Working with you to develop teaching strategies	1	2	1	2	3
c. Consulting with you about classroom management	1	2	1	2	3
d. Working with you to develop lessons	1	2	1	2	3
e. Discussing child development issues that might affect your classroom	1	2	1	2	3
f. Consulting with you about discipline	1	2	1	2	3
g. Sharing research on teaching methods with you	1	2	1	2	3
h. Helping you look at learning problems in new ways	1	2	1	2	3

5. I know this may be a difficult question to answer. Do you feel your interaction with CTC staff has affected your thinking about teaching and children?

   yes....(ASK A).....1
   no.....2

   A. How?

6. What did you find most useful about your experiences with CTC staff? (PROBE: Is there any one experience that stands out in your mind?)